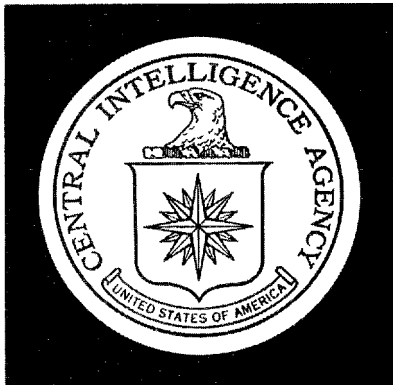


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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

State Dept. review completed

ARMY review(s) completed.

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Information as of 1600
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HIGHLIGHTS

An article in the May issue of the North Vietnamese party theoretical journal contained an oblique but unmistakable attack on Mao Tse-tung.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam: Elements of the 5th US Marine Regiment have successfully completed the second phase of Operation UNION in southern I Corps (Paras. 1-3). Infiltration of cadre into the delta is discussed (Paras. 4-6).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam: A new political party, ostensibly to be a voice of the ethnic minorities

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(Paras. 1-2). The Vietnam Nationalist Party (VNQDD) met in congress in Saigon on 4 June (Paras. 3-4).

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IV. Other Communist Military Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: An article in the North Vietnamese party journal presenting an oblique attack on Mao Tse-tung is discussed (Paras. 1-6).

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VI. Other Major Aspects:

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some North Vietnamese troops and heavy weapons are returning to North Vietnam (Paras. 1-2).

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Elements of the 5th US Marine Regiment have successfully completed the second phase of a major spoiling campaign against the 2nd North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Division in southern I Corps.

2. The Marine offensive--codenamed Operation UNION--was conducted from 21 April to 5 June in an area some 25 miles southeast of Da Nang in coastal Quang Tin Province. Communist resistance to the allied probe varied from moderate to heavy and, at times, involved regimental-sized or larger enemy main force units. According to MACV, Operations UNION I and II inflicted known losses of 1,566 killed on major elements of the 2nd NVA Division's 21st and 3rd Regiments thus seriously reducing their combat effectiveness for operations in the much-heralded Communist summer campaign planned for the coastal delta area of Military Region 5.

3. American casualties during the campaign included 220 killed and 713 wounded.

Infiltration of Cadre Into Delta

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4. Southern Viet Cong cadre in Bac Lieu Province are reportedly becoming disaffected because of the influx of young, inexperienced regroupes from North Vietnam to assume positions of responsibility.

the southerners, most of whom participated in the resistance against the French and remained in the South after the Geneva Accords, are discouraged because they are being replaced by persons who were in their early or mid-teens when they were regrouped to North Vietnam and are just now returning to the South. A group of 150 such cadre was scheduled to arrive beginning in early April.

5. The regroupes, because of their lack of experience, are being placed in positions where they

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will have no contact with the allies and will handle only internal matters. The older cadre who formerly held these positions are being sent out to undertake more dangerous assignments. The Viet Cong Bac Lieu Province Committee in early May ordered its subordinate district committees to conduct indoctrination courses for disaffected older cadre.

6. It is not new for some regrouped southerners to be brought in to assume political or military positions in the South, or to have friction develop between the "stay-behinds" and the regroupes, but such wholesale replacement of older cadre is unusual, especially in the delta. This is the first indication in recent years of any substantial influx of personnel from the North into the far South, either for military or political posts. It is thus possible that the Communists now are finding it necessary to beef up their delta position through greater infiltration. In the other corps areas of South Vietnam, infiltrating personnel have gradually assumed a greater share of the over-all war effort and management of the enemy apparatus during the past two years.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. [redacted] Dam Van Quy, a member of the Provisional National Assembly (PNA) elected to fill an ethnic minority seat from Tuyen Duc Province, has founded a new political party. The announced objectives of his party--the Vietnam National Minorities Greater Solidarity Bloc--are to protect the interests of the minority peoples and support the country's war objectives.

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2. Quy, formerly the chief of Binh Thuan Province, is chairman of the new party and is assisted by three vice chairmen who will look after the interests of the three major ethnic minority groups--the Chams, Khmers, and Montagnards. Each of these vice chairmen is a delegate to the PNA, elected as a representative of one of those minority peoples.

The VNQDD Tries Again

3. A two-day congress of the Vietnamese Nationalist Party (VNQDD) started in Saigon on 4 June, according to an embassy report. The meeting was called by Vu Hong Khanh, leader of the "northern refugee" faction of the splintered VNQDD. More than 200 delegates from throughout the country attended the conclave on its opening day and heard a very optimistic speech by Khanh. Other items on the agenda included a draft of new rules of the party, a debate on party policy and theory, and the election of a new chairman and central executive committee.

4. This meeting is apparently another attempt of the party to patch together some manner of united VNQDD effort in the presidential and upper house elections. Given the past failures of the VNQDD leadership to pull together in any joint national political enterprise,

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the prognosis for positive results is not good. The leaders of the three principal factions of the VNQDD met in March with the objective of uniting their factions in a joint effort for the national elections. An announcement of the merger of the various factions was supposed to have been published at the end of March, but it has apparently never been issued.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. The Vietnam Workers Party (VWP) in North Vietnam has taken an unprecedented step by issuing an oblique, but nevertheless unmistakable, attack on Mao Tse-tung. The attack came in the form of an article by Hong Chuong, deputy editor of the party journal Hoc Tap, and published in the May issue.

2. Ostensibly a paean to Ho Chi Minh on his 77th birthday, Chuong's article instead addressed in detail the VWP attitude toward Communist leaders and the proper method of exercising leadership within a Communist Party. It contrasted the attitude of Ho and the VWP, who follow the correct road of "collective leadership," with the attitude of an unnamed "certain leader," who "acts in accordance with his subjective wishes" while ignoring party councils.

3. The article left no doubt as to the target of its attack by asserting that "a leader of the working class does not separate the working class from its vanguard, the Communist Party." This is a point repeatedly stressed also by the USSR in its attacks on China, and an unmistakable reference to Mao's creation and use of the "Red Guards" as a weapon against the regular party apparatus. In another swipe at Mao, Chuong observed that although the Vietnamese Party "respects and loves" Ho Chi Minh, "we do not deify him," because, "deification of a leader will lower the role of the masses of people and even the leader himself." Mao is the only current Communist Party leader clearly identified with "deification."

4. Chuong also lashed out at the practice of leaders who "ignore collective leadership," arguing that only by obeying the "group of the party's leadership organ," (the politburo) can "one-sided and erroneous decisions be prevented." This is undoubtedly meant to be taken as a reference to Mao's autocratic treatment of his politburo and

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central committee which have been subjected to a purge of Stalinist proportions during the past year.

5. The implications of this personal and open assault on Mao for Sino-DRV relations could be enormous. It should be noted, however, that the North Vietnamese have not yet followed up on this article with further attacks on Mao, nor have the Chinese reacted publicly. Chinese support for the war effort has continued without interruption. If no further such articles appear, it would suggest that Chuong's attack was designed merely as a one-time, specific response to some new action by China contrary to Hanoi's interests.

6. The bitterness of the Chuong article, however, suggests strongly that Hanoi's feelings on Mao run deeply. It constitutes an indirect indication that Hanoi would not look adversely on the removal of Mao from power. The article stated that "if a leader commits errors, yet refuses to correct them, and insistently maintains them, he cannot keep his leadership role forever."

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VI. OTHER MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

1.

[redacted] some North Vietnamese troops and heavy weapons units are returning to North Vietnam. [redacted] approximately one hundred North Vietnamese troops per day were observed during the month of May moving northward along the main Laotian infiltration route toward the Mu Gia Pass. [redacted]

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[redacted] In addition, antiaircraft artillery has been reported moving north through Mu Gia during May.

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2. Although the number of North Vietnamese troops involved in these movements is probably exaggerated, a partial withdrawal of North Vietnamese forces in the panhandle has been noted in past years during the closing weeks of the dry season. The Communists nonetheless will continue to maintain substantial forces in the area to guard the infiltration routes during the wet season.

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